

28 June 1972

The Honorable Les Aspin
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515

Dear Mr. Aspin:

The Congressional Record of June 27, 1972, carries a letter addressed to me by you announcing your release of 'substantial new evidence that indicates U. S. pilots flying CIA operated helicopters have been smuggling opium inside Laos.'

I have yet to receive your letter. Pending its receipt, however, I shall begin a thorough investigation of this alleged 'new evidence' and will advise you in due course of the results. In this connection, I call to your attention the testimony of Mr. Nelson Gross, Senior Advisor to the Secretary of State and Coordinator for International Narcotics Matters, before the Congressional Inquiry Regarding International Narcotics Traffic on June 9, 1972. He there quoted the Air America Managing Director's statement that Mr. Alfred McCoy's allegation before the Foreign Operations Subcommittee of the Senate Appropriations Committee that Air America aircraft have been transporting opium in Northern Laos on a regular basis is 'utterly and absolutely false.'

In the interim, I wish to reiterate strongly what I have said publicly to the American Society of Newspaper Editors:

"There is the arrant nonsense that the Central Intelligence Agency is somehow involved in the world drug traffic. We are not. As fathers, we are as concerned about the lives of our children and grandchildren as are all of you. As an Agency, in fact, we are heavily engaged in tracing the foreign roots of the drug traffic for the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs. We hope we are helping with a solution; we know we are not contributing to the problem."

In addition, you will have no doubt noticed in the Congressional Record of June 2, 1971, that Congressman Charles Gubser cited a letter from Mr. John Ingersoll, Director of the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs, attesting to the fact that this Agency has taken a great number of steps against the narcotics trade. Further, we have issued the strongest instructions, and have most vigorously enforced them, to prohibit any inadvertent use of CIA facilities by narcotics smugglers.

In the light of these well-established positions, we find it disappointing to be subjected to the type of public allegation represented by graduate student McCoy's assertions of 'new evidence,' the innuendo in which can only dishearten CIA personnel of honor and integrity working against this noxious trade.

I have taken the liberty of sending a copy of this letter to Congressman Gubser because of his interest in these matters.

Sincerely,

~~for~~ Richard Helms

Richard Helms
Director

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